

## FD says it's ready for hazardous spills

[By Doug Murphy](#)

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What happens if the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway is built and there is a hazardous materials spill one day?

That was the question the Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee wanted answered.

Generally speaking, help is nearby, with a specially trained hazardous materials unit at Phoenix Fire Station 38, at Warner Road and Interstate 10, plus other special hazmat units in neighboring cities.

“We can mobilize an army pretty quickly,” Deputy Chief Rom Jamison told the Village Planning Committee Monday night during a presentation.

But when it comes to evacuations, “Mass evacuation is a super difficult situation – it would be hard to get away,” Jamison said.

Fortunately, most hazardous materials calls received by the Phoenix Fire Department are for natural gas leaks followed by fuel spills.

“We don’t really have a large number of chemical calls,” Jamison said.

Which is fortunate, because a major chlorine leak, in a worse case scenario, could result in an area up to 24 square miles being impacted, said Dan Roe of the Arizona Emergency Response Commission.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, a major chlorine leak from a liquid tank truck would require the immediate evacuation of at least 2.5 square miles, and more if it occurred at night.

That’s roughly from Pecos Road near Desert Vista High School to Chandler Boulevard at 44th Street and Ironwood Branch Library.

But with a limited number of east/west roads, Greta Rogers called Ahwatukee Foothills “a spaghetti bowl of incomplete streets,” evacuations could be more difficult than in other parts of the city.

“You’re going to have one big glue pot of gridlock,” speculated Rogers who opposes construction of the freeway.

The South Mountain Loop 202, if built over Pecos Road, is estimated to carry around 160,000 vehicles a day, a little more than the 145,000 vehicles carried on Interstate 10 around Warner Road each day.

But Mike Harris of Ahwatukee Foothills isn’t especially worried about trucks carrying hazardous materials along the Loop 202.

“It’s not going to be any more hazardous than it would be on I-10,” said Harris, who is semi-retired after a career in handling and disposing of hazardous materials.

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